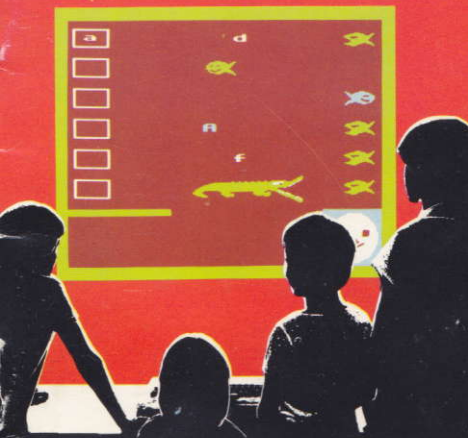


HAPPY LETTERS

Letter recognition and matching program



Bourne Educational Software

AMSTRAD CPC 464

- Encourages children to recognise letters.
- Enables children to practice matching lower case and capital letters.
- Teaches young children the layout of the keyboard.

SPECIAL FEATURES

- 'Happy Face' responses to entries.
- Animated crocodile appears after each exercise, eating those fish where the child failed to make the correct entry.
- Features full BES Monitor facilities. Gives information on individual childrens' entries, allowing identification of particular problem letters.
- Complete with fully explanatory booklet.
- Widely used in schools.

Best suited for children aged 3 to 6 years.

HAPPY LETTERS

A column of letters appears on the screen. A moving letter gradually moves down the column. The child needs to press a key when the moving letter is the same as the one opposite. When correctly matched, a fish swims out from the side and eats both letters before swimming back with a smile. If wrongly matched, then the child is given another go. Only if the second attempt is also wrong does the program show which letter gives the correct match.

Later stages teach the child to match capital and lower case letters, and to match a key with a letter on the screen. The speed of the program can be set according to the skill of the child.

Happy Letters records all the answers a child gives and consequently, childrens' progress can be checked very easily.

PROGRAM NOTES CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
LOADING	5
THE MAIN PROGRAM:	5
1. Start	5
2. Look up MONITOR results	10
3. Set time limit	11
THE HAPPY SERIES	11
OTHER BES PROGRAMS	13
THIS BOOKLET	16

INTRODUCTION

This program has been designed to assist children in the task of recognising letters. It is aimed at a very young audience and consequently is designed to be very easy to use. In the early options children need only use two keys – ENTER and the < space > bar. The motivational aspects of the game are animated fishes and crocodiles, both of which have proved very popular.

The program covers both lower case letters and recognising the corresponding upper case letters. In order to familiarise children with the keyboard there is also the option to find keys corresponding to letters on the screen. This has been extended to match lower case letters on the screen with the keys. This is designed to help overcome the problem of the keyboard being limited to upper case letters on the keys.

In common with most BES programs, use of the ESCape key takes you back to the main set of program options. Simply press ESCape twice to revert to the main menu.

It is recommended for use with children of between three and six years old, and in situations where children experience particular difficulties with letter recognition.

4 *Happy Letters*

LOADING

It is best to press CTRL/SHIFT and whilst holding them down, press and release the ESCape key. This resets the computer before loading. The cassette should be placed in the Datacorder with the label upwards/outwards and the tape wound back to the beginning.

Simply press CTRL and the small ENTER key, followed by pressing the PLAY key on the Datacorder and then pressing any other key.

Loading of the program takes about four minutes.

Having completed loading, the program displays the title and copyright screen for a few seconds. No entries are necessary and the program will automatically move on to the main menu screen.

THE MAIN PROGRAM

The program offers the following options:

1. START

The opening screen lists the options available:

1. Matching lower case letters.
2. Matching lower case letters/words.
3. Matching upper/lower cases.
4. Finding upper case keys
5. Finding upper case keys given lower case letters.

Option 1. Matching lower case letters

This option helps to develop letter shape recognition and the matching abilities of children at the simplest level, i.e. matching lower case letter to lower case letter. To start, a choice is given of which sequence of letters is to be used through choosing of the initial letter of a sequence of six. Thus choice of A leads to practice of A through to F, B to B through to G, U to U through Z, etc.

Having chosen the sequence the program requests the child's name; this can often be entered by the child at an early age. After entry (followed by ENTER, of course) the screen appears with six lower case letters to the right of centre, and the lower case letter to be matched appears below and to the left of the other letters. It then moves upwards and appears against each letter for a period of time (as set under the initial menu option 4). The letter to be matched is randomly chosen from the set of 6 letters, and the child has to press ENTER when opposite the correctly matching letter. The correct entry is rewarded by a 'happy face' and a tune. The fish then swims out to eat the letter, smiles, turns green to indicate success, and swims back. The correctly interpreted letter appears in a

corresponding box at the left-hand side of the screen coloured green.

When < space> appears at the bottom it is necessary to press the space bar to start the next cycle.

An incorrectly timed entry is indicated by a 'oh-oh' sound and the face grimacing. The opportunity is given to try again in the next cycle.

A further incorrect entry is again indicated by another 'oh-oh' and the face grimacing. However, the correct match is indicated briefly by a box flashing round the correct letter, followed by < space >. A further incorrect entry leads to the letter being moved to the corresponding left hand box, but coloured red. The fish on the right-hand side turns red.

The sequence continues until all the letters are transferred to the left-hand boxes.

Having completed all six letters the child is rewarded by a crocodile appearing, and failing to catch the fishes corresponding to the correctly matched letters. The fishes corresponding to the incorrectly matched letters get eaten!

On completion of the cycle the option is given to have another go. If this is chosen the main sequence is repeated, otherwise the

user is returned to the main menu.

Option 2. Matching lower case letters/ words

This option takes the child on from the first option and develops the recognition of a lower case letter at the start of a word by looking for a match with the moving letter. This is visually more complex. The initial choice is of the sequential letters in the same manner as Option 1. In choosing a letter A through to U the screen appears with a series of short words starting with the series of six letters chosen.

On pressing ENTER when the given letter is lined up with the same letter at the beginning of the word the child is rewarded by the fish eating both the letter and the word. The word is then moved to a box on the left-hand side of the screen. Similar responses are obtained as with Option 1, and the crocodile appears in the same way as in the previous option.

Option 3. Matching Upper and Lower Case Letters

This option is similar to Option 1 except that the moving letter is upper case. This therefore teaches the child to relate upper case to

lower case letters. Similar responses and rewards exist as for the previous two options.

Option 4. Finding Upper Case Keys

This part of the program takes the child on... from using the < space > bar and ENTER keys to matching the given upper case letter on the screen to the upper case letter on the keyboard. The allowable time is set under Option 4 of the menu, and in order to achieve the responses of a tune, happy face and the fish eating the letter, the child has to press the matching key within the set time. Failure to do so within the time leads to a grimace and a 'oh-oh!'. The child is given a second try in the next cycle. If an incorrect key is depressed similar responses are obtained. If the child fails the third time to make the correct entry, the letter is transferred to the corresponding box on the left-hand side of the screen and coloured red.

Note that ENTER does not have to be pressed after each entry.

On completion of the sequence the crocodile emerges, eating any of the fish representing the incorrectly entered letters.

Option 5. Finding Upper Case Keys Given Lower Case Letters

Having developed the skills of matching upper and lower case letters on the screen, this option helps children relate lower case letters on the screen with the upper case letters on the keyboard. This skill is particularly necessary to help children move on to more complex educational programs, when entries in lower case letters are accomplished using the keyboard.

The format of this part of the program is similar to the previous option, with similar responses.

2. LOOK UP MONITOR RESULTS

All interactive BES programs contain a performance recording system or MONITOR. Using this, teachers, parents or the child can see how well a child has managed with the stages attempted.

Each time a stage is started, a new monitor record is created. The facility will hold the record of the last six children (after number six, number seven will be recorded over number one, eight over two, etc.).

Data available under this option includes:

- (a) Individual child's name
- (b) Time taken for the stage – in minutes
- (c) The category used – the menu number and, for example, the upper case letters with upper case keys
- (d) The moving letters and the child's individual entries. Note that 'Time-out' indicates that the child has failed to make an entry within the allowed time. Correctly matched letters appear in green, and incorrect ones in red. A '?' indicates that the ENTER key was pressed when the letter was aligned with a blank letter or word.

Careful analysis of the information stored in these records can provide as valuable guide to specific letter recognition problems or more general difficulties or successes.

3. SET TIME LIMIT

To cater for different levels of skill and to add interest and stimulus, the delay time for the movement of letters on the screen in Options 1–3 and the time to find a key in Options 4–5, can be adjusted. This is entered as a number between 3 and 20. This is interpreted as tenths of a second in 1–3 (variable between 0.3 and 2 seconds) and whole seconds in 4–5.

It should be noted that it is important to set the time according to the ability of the child. Setting too short a time can make the task quite difficult and may completely discourage a young child.

THE HAPPY SERIES

The Happy Series is a range of programs from BES aimed at children in the age range of 3-6 years. The range covers among others number, letter and writing skills. One of the companion programs to Happy Letters is Happy Numbers which helps children recognise numbers and count from 1 to 9. The program features a simple but appealing score display, as well as the usual detailed MONITOR recording of childrens' entries. The program can be set to help the practice of 'difficult' numbers.

The program is aimed at a very young audience and consequently is exceptionally easy to use. It helps children to learn their numbers and count without the need of reading skills. Attractive graphics make this a favourite with 3 to 5 year olds.

A further companion program, 'Happy Writing', has been designed to assist children to write, and in particular, to form their letters or numbers correctly. It is recommended for use

with children between 3 and 5 years old, and in cases where specific practice is needed.

The microcomputer is used in this program as a means of presenting to children the dynamic aspects of writing, overcoming some of the shortfalls of traditional methods, and in particular, supplementing the demonstration of direction and form by adults.

In addition, the program allows the child by the simple use of < space > bar to repeat the forming of a figure or a word.

As with all BES programs, the speed can be adjusted to suit the ability and requirements of the user.

OTHER BES PROGRAMS

Happy Letters is one of a series of Microcomputer programs produced by Bourne Educational Software Ltd with the aim of making learning both easy and enjoyable. The programs are aimed at both home and school use, and are designed to enable children of the appropriate age range to operate them readily through common use of such items as ESCape key to return to a menu of program options; < SPACE > to move on to a next screen and so on.

A common feature with most BES programs is the BES MONITOR system, which allows the teacher, parent or child access to the specific entries made, so allowing identification of specific achievements or problem areas. This does not preclude the use in

appropriate programs of a more simple and visible scoring system, which is designed to aid motivation.

BES programs are designed to be largely self-explanatory, and follow similar styles. Children rapidly familiarise themselves with new programs, and can use them if required with the minimum of help.

Other BES programs in the range include:

Timeman One

The program helps children tell the time and set a clock. Attractive scoring with man and a ladder keeps childrens interest. Choice of twelve progressive stages of difficulty, together with the usual attractive sound, colour and monitoring facilities.

(Age 4–9 years).

Timeman Two

Companion program covering minutes to the hour, half and quarter hours and the 24-hour clock. Same attractive features as Timeman One with progressive stages of difficulty, together with attractive sound, colour and monitoring facilities.

(Age 4–10 years).

World-Wise

Two programs to stimulate children to 'teach the computer' about geography. Encourages the use of atlases and reference books, helps exam studies and introduces the use of the computer to store information. Data can be readily saved and reloaded at any time.

(Age range 7–15 years).

14 *Happy Letters*

Map Rally

Try to find the hidden checkpoints in a race against your opponent or the clock! Map co-ordinates and directions are soon mastered as children learn to control the cars. After each rally they can watch the cars retrace the routes taken, showing how well each driver did.

(Age 7–13 years).

Animal/Vegetable/Mineral

This program provides hours of fun and enjoyment as the computer tries to guess the object a child has thought of. The computer's failure to guess correctly encourages children to help the computer to tell the difference between the various objects. The program stimulates discussion and the use of reference books. Suitable for all ages 7 years and upwards.

Word Hang

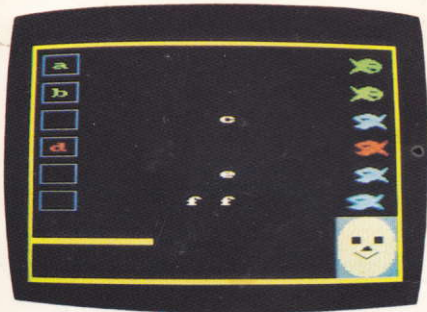
This version of the traditional 'Hangman' spelling game has been described as "... the Rolls-Royce of them all"! Features over 250 words plus the ability to enter your own words – either individually or as a group (ideal for that weekly spelling list!). Improves spelling at all ages of 5 years and upwards.

THIS BOOKLET

BES programs always include explanatory booklets of this type to satisfy several aims. Firstly, to identify the objectives of the program, and to give guidance as to some possible uses of the program based on experiences during the extensive in-classroom and in-house testing period. Secondly, they are designed to give an understanding of the sequences encountered in the programs, since in many situations the time of access to the micro is at a premium. Thirdly, the booklet will assist in using the substantial content of BES programs to the full, through reference to it before, during an after use of them on the micro.

In the event of any problems with the use of this program, or ideas as to improvements which could be incorporated, please do not hesitate to contact BES at the address on the back cover.

Please note: Minor variations in specification may occur due to characteristics of different microcomputers and operating systems.



"Happy Letters is an exciting and worthwhile program. The graphics are simple but effective and certainly appeal to young children."

Educational Computing



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